

PHIL 4331: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Spring 2021

Instructor:	David Boylan	Time:	T,R 9.30 – 10.50 AM
Email:	dboylan@ttu.edu	Place:	Zoom
Office hours:	M 12–1 PM		

Course Description: This course is about language and linguistic meaning. One of our central questions is *what is meaning?* This is the *semantic question*. Our second central question is *how do words get meanings in the first place?* This is the *metasemantic question*. We will examine various answers to these questions in texts drawn from early analytic philosophy, the period where serious philosophy of language arguably began. Just as these writers did, we will try to get a handle on the big picture questions by constructing theories of meanings for particular kinds of expressions, namely *names* and *sentences*. We will examine the pros and cons of these theories, both in terms of the semantic and the metasemantic question. In the final third of the course, we will take up our third question, *how do we use language to say more than we mean?*. This is the *pragmatic question*. Here we will think about pragmatic notions such as speech acts, implicature and assertion.

Course Format: The course will be entirely online and will be a blend of asynchronous and synchronous teaching. (This format is subject to change depending on collective preferences and general troubleshooting.) On Sunday evenings I will upload onto the course website a link to a video lecture, which you must watch before the Thursday meeting. (I will be available during our meeting time on Tuesday for questions on the lecture.) Our Thursday meetings will largely be a discussion of the material from the lecture. Attendance at the Thursday meeting is compulsory; but the Tuesday meeting is optional.

Course Meetings: Course meetings will be held on Zoom. I will post a link on Blackboard to a recurring meeting, along with the login details.

In terms of class etiquette, here is the basic rule of thumb: if you would not be permitted to do something in a physical lecture, you are not permitted to do it in our Zoom meetings either.

Required Texts: The course textbook is Martinich and Sosa's *Philosophy of Language*, sixth edition. Almost all of the readings will be taken from this book; any primary readings not from the book will be posted on Blackboard.

Discussion board: There is a discussion board on the website that you will use to discuss the readings ahead of one reading every week. Forum posts should be 100-200 words and should include a short summary of some aspect of the reading and some thought or comment on or objection to that aspect. I will usually post prompts to discuss specific parts of the reading. (If I don't, you're free to choose for yourself.)

I will also always create a forum for you to ask clarificatory questions about the reading. You must post at least one clarificatory question each week, *in addition* to the longer post above.

Forum posts must be made by **midnight on Wednesdays**.

Assessment: You will write one medium length paper (~3,000 words) and one longer final paper (~5,000 words). The first paper will be due on March 18 and the final paper on May 4. There will be three short

writing assignments, distributed throughout the semester. These will be shorter assignments (/longer versions of forum posts) that ask you to summarise some argument in more detail and give a short response. These may form the basis for your longer papers, if you so choose.

There will also be a participation grade based on your contribution to discussion in class and a grade based on your forum posts. Your camera must be turned on for you to be counted as present.

The grades will be broken down as follows:

- Writing assignments: 5% (x 3 = 15%)
- Paper 1: 25%
- Paper 2: 35%
- Participation in class: 12.5%
- Forum posts: 12.5%

Writing assignments must be submitted on time; late assignments will receive an F. For papers 1 and 2, one half of a letter grade (5%) will be subtracted per day late, and you will receive a grade of 0 if more than seven days late.

Course Schedule

Schedule is subject to change.

- Week 1: Intro lecture
 - Course handout

SEMANTICS AND METASEMANTICS OF NAMES

- Week 2: Early Modern Philosophy of Language
 - Locke, “Of Words”
 - Mill, “Of Names”
- Week 3: Frege
 - Frege, “On Sense and Reference”
- Week 4: Russell on Descriptions and Names
 - Russell, “On Denoting”
- Week 5: The Frege-Russell Theory of Names:
 - Russell, “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description”
 - Searle, “Proper Names”

- Week 6: Kripke Against the Frege-Russell Theory
 - Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*
- Week 7: Generalising Kripke's Argument
 - Putnam, "Meaning and Reference"

META-SEMANTICS

- Week 8: Meaning as Use
 - Wittgenstein, Excerpt from *Philosophical Investigations*
 - Chomsky, Review of Skinner's *Verbal Behaviour*
- Week 9: Intentional theories
 - Grice, "Meaning"
- Week 10: Convention
 - Lewis, "Languages and Language"
- Week 11: Chomskyan theories
 - Chomsky, "Language and Problems of Knowledge"

SAYING MORE THAN WE MEAN

- Week 12: Speech act theory
 - Austin, "How to Do Things with Words"
- Week 13: Implicature
 - Grice, "Logic and Conversation"
- Week 14, Metaphor
 - Reiner and Camp, "Metaphor"
- Week 15, TBD
- Week 16, Wrap-up

General course policies

Academic integrity: Cheating and plagiarism are, of course, prohibited in this class. They will be taken particularly seriously, and any cases that may arise will be treated in a manner consistent with University policy. These two violations of academic integrity are each defined in the section of the Texas Tech online official publications titled “Academic Integrity”. ‘Plagiarism’ includes, but is not limited to, “the appropriation of, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, other expression and media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit.” (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentconduct/academicinteg.php>)

You can find excellent explanations of what specifically constitutes plagiarism as opposed to proper citation, and also tutorials on how to avoid plagiarism at the following websites:

- <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/>
- <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

If, at any time, you are at all unclear about what counts as plagiarism, or about whether you are properly citing sources in any of your written work, **ask me**.

Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one’s own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching, and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers.

Accommodations: Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor’s office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or call 806-742-2405.

Religious holy days: “Religious holy day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code 11.20. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

Title IX Violations: Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the Office for Student Rights & Resolution,

(806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at titleix.ttu.edu/students. Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are: TTU Student Counseling Center, 806-742-3674, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/> (Provides confidential support on campus.) TTU 24-hour Crisis Helpline, 806-742-5555, (Assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor.) Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, 806-763-7273, voiceofhopelubbock.org (24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence.) The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office, 806-742-2110, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/rise/> (Provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness.) Texas Tech Police Department, 806-742-3931, <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ttpd/> (To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.)

Civility in the Classroom: Texas Tech University is a community of faculty, students, and staff that enjoys an expectation of cooperation, professionalism, and civility during the conduct of all forms of university business, including the conduct of student–student and student–faculty interactions in and out of the classroom. Further, the classroom is a setting in which an exchange of ideas and creative thinking should be encouraged and where intellectual growth and development are fostered. Students who disrupt this classroom mission by rude, sarcastic, threatening, abusive or obscene language and/or behavior will be subject to appropriate sanctions according to university policy. Likewise, faculty members are expected to maintain the highest standards of professionalism in all interactions with all constituents of the university (www.depts.ttu.edu/ethics/matadorchallenge/ethicalprinciples.php).

LGBTQIA Support: I identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu, 806.742.5433.